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Cover painting: Judgement By His Peers.

Year: 1978

Size: 75cm x 105cm

Medium: Oil on canvas

Photograph by: National Museum of Australia, Canberra.

Artist: Gordon Syron.

Father's Country: Worimi

Mother's Country: Biripi

Language: Ghatang

Statement:

The painting “Judgement By His Peers” is historically important as it was painted by Syron in his prison cell at Long Bay Gaol where he served 10 years of a life sentence. Syron killed a white man over the loss of his family's land, (several thousand acres they had purchased). The year was 1972, ironically the same time as the Tent Embassy 1972 was taking place in Canberra. Syron never returned as an inmate.

“This painting is my most meaningful work. It is the story of my life. This trial happened to me. I challenged the jury system of Australia. I asked that I be judged by my peers, as your peers are your equals.

I asked to have some Aboriginal people on my jury. One lawyer said that I wasn't black enough to be black and the other lawyer said that I wasn't white enough to be white. They then argued this point in front of me for some time. Both my parents were Aboriginal. It was such an insult to me and my family.

I was judged by an all-white jury. I served a life sentence.”

Cover design and layout by Francisco Fisher

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